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847 I am well convinced that the old man spoke the strict truth in describing the practice of infanticide as a thing of the past; basing my belief, on the general appearance of things, rather than on statistics. (1.) If the custom still prevailed, the circumstance could not have remained hidden from the people of neighbouring tribes, with whom a very close degree of intimacy is maintained: and its commission forming a topic of conversation in their bazaars and meetings, the news would in due course certainly have reached our ears. (2.) The people sitting before us, in course of close examination as to the number and condition of their families, would undoubtedly have evinced by manner or voice, if at any time, we were approaching a dreaded and secret subject. (3.) Two, three, and even four living daughters were met with in families: and I may add, the girls looked in very good condition and as well cared for, as the rest of the household.

177 847 168 In the year 1822—or 48 years prior to the date of my census—the Government of Madras put a pressure on the Todas, in order to impel them to forsake their murderous practice.* But no statistics exist, and none can now be formed, that will afford us means of judging the actual state of the habit, anterior to that date.

847 In a previous chapter of this book—in that treating on the Census—the average age at which Toda women commence to bear children, is noted as 17 years. Those women therefore, who are 48+17=65 years old, must be the earliest who show the effect of the Government's repressive action. Hence it is, that we must look to the information regarding births and deaths which has been afforded by the mothers, rating from

* Owing to a deficiency in the records of the Madras Government, we do not know how infanticide was actually stopped; but the orders given in its letter of 21st July, 1820, were to frustrate the practice 'by all means of encouragement and persuasion.' In carrying these orders into effect, I believe that the persuasion employed was of an impressive character.

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compensatory skill of savages, which they owe greatly to their large organ of Weight.

In the description of the Toda character, founded on phrenologic basis, which I afforded in previous chapters, I have endeavoured to express, how weak they are in those groups of mental qualities which enable men to surmount difficulties in life by the force of their natural energies; how that their whole nature is built for the maintenance of the existing state of things: how free from cruelty, and how fond of children: how practical their character, though limited in range of vision: and how deficient in tenacity.

I have also tried to enable my readers to realise the early state of things; when the increase of numbers due to the luxurious nature of an equatorial climate had outstepped the supply of food: and the growth of human intellect—giving the ability to augment the supply—had failed to keep pace with the growing density of the population.

Now, resolve all these forces—the natural tendencies of primitive man, and the circumstances by which surrounded—in such direction as exactly to neutralise one another; and you work out the problem which the Todas had to solve. Only three courses were open to them: (1.) The progressive exercise of combined labour and skill. (2.) Abstinence from marriage. (3.) Destruction of children.

They tried the first, and failed. In regard to the second, Nature, who is ever careful of her own interests, was doubtless altogether too strong for them. We see they adopted the third course, but in such manner as to give their gentle natures—gentle above all to children—the least suffering, by killing the infants without pain, and before the parents had opportunity to love them.

The great similarity in the dispositions of the two sexes assures me that mothers co-operated with fathers willingly in the deed.

If the Todas had possessed a large organ of *Acquisitiveness*,